

Pilot

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Summary: The perspective of a Pilot during the abandon of Reach.

Pilot

I am a pilot. Well, for now, I mean. I don't know about tomorrow or the day after, but right now my concern lies with right now. My concern lies with the sky and the ground. In the sky, I see UNSC ships taking fire and returning fire on Covenant assault vessels. On the ground, I can see blurs of Marines and Grunts taking their turns at ending each others lives. My Pelican was loaded with 24 Marines, fully armed and armored, with one mission. Take the lives of those who would take theirs. Shoot first, shoot last, and skip the fucking questions. I had respect for these guys. They had balls. They were selflessly dropping into an apocalyptic war-zone. Granted, it's not easy flying through the thick of it, but it's what I do. I noted my trajectories and gauges as I zipped through the combat. My cargo bay door opened, and up from the ladder came a Marine. A rather angry looking Sergeant whose name read 'JOHNSON' "Lieutenant." He greeted me as he sat in my copilot seat. I had no copilot. Pelicans were easy enough to fly alone, and the UNSC was too undermanned to give me one. Either way, I preferred being alone. If he were to die from a stray plasma bolt sitting next to me, I would probably be so scared or edgy I couldn't fly. Plus I can play my music and think to myself with no interruptions. I can slink into my zone and fly without thinking. Sheer reaction, skill, and knowledge determining whether I was to live or die. That was just fine to me; I seemed to excel at it. "Sarge, how are your men?" I asked. He nodded slowly and brushed some dirt from his chest plate. There was a slow, uneasy silence as we looked down on the men dying on the fields below us. "They're cocked, locked, and ready to rock. As always." Sarge answered with the hint of pre-combat fear on his breath. Jesus, who was I to talk? I wasn't even going down there and I was as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. I knew what he was thinking, though. Thank God my men are unable to see what I am looking upon now. The horrible sight of your brothers dying on the field, slaughtered by a

superior enemy with no motives other than their fake Gods told them to. They don't understand that their Gods can command them to do whatever, my God will kick their Gods in the balls and spit on their mother's graves. My timer beeped, telling me that I have one minute to get to my rendezvous point and let off my payload. I motioned to the Sergeant, who patted me on the shoulder with a shaking hand. "Thanks for the lift, son." He grunted as he made his way down the ladder into the cargo hold. I heard him start barking orders as he closed the hatch. I could still hear his yelling. Finally, I heard it stop at 30 seconds left. I grabbed my intercom and broadcasted to them. "Okay, Marines! This is your pilot speaking! Drop commences in 15 seconds. I'm opening the cargo bay doors now, so you can spray and pray at any Covvies below you. Let off at least one clip into them, and then grab the spare clip I hid under your seat and get the fuck out of my Pelican!" I barked at them. I flipped a small switch above me and I heard the familiar whining and grinding of my bay doors open. I heard the familiar 'Ooh-Wah!' of confirmation, and then gunfire exploded. I checked my rear monitor and saw lines of Grunts falling with methane gas leaking out of their suits, filled with lead. I slowed down to 50 MPH and descended to 10 feet. I heard them all reload their MA5B Assault Rifles. This was it, the big one. I brought my ship to a halt and dropped my Warthog. Think of it as a jeep, a really big, heavy, 4-engined damned near indestructible beast of a machine. Oh yea, they are standard equipped with a 3 barreled chain fed automatic cannon on the back. Not bad. I noticed my weight meter. It dropped from the warthog, and then dropped about another ton and a half from the marines. I heard them start firing on the enemies. Soon I knew they were all out. I heard the warthog rev its engines and the chain-gun began eating away at the enemy. "Godspeed, Marines." I said to no one. I closed my cargo bay, ascended to 50 feet, and accelerated to 100 MPH. I suppose you should know about my modifications. I added two warthog chain-guns onto the landing platforms that lower from the hull. Each cannon contains more ammo than you would care to hear about. I had never used them, and this could be the first time I would have to. My radio blared and cracked, a transmission coming in. The voice ordered me to turn around and get any Marines I saw, and then get back on the first ship you see. We were abandoning Reach. Our fortress planet and pride of the UNSC was now nothing more than an abandoned, smoldering ruin. I looped my pelican and headed for the Sergeant. I saw other pelicans picking up Marines and civilians caught in the crossfire. After a few minutes, I saw a heated battle of Marines in a Phalanx formation fighting off at least a hundred grunts. That was Johnson's group, and they were losing. I activated my landing gear and loaded the chains. The 6 barrels spun to life as I pulled the trigger. Over 50 rounds a second were flooding into the Covenant bastards, their seemingly fragile bodies unable to handle the unstoppable barrage of bullets. The Marines cheered and picked off the last of them. I lowered my ship, letting each one back on. None had died. I picked up the warthog and began the ascent into space. Johnson stumbled into my cockpit, his hands bloodied, his chest plate stained blue with plasma. He grasped my arm and grinned at me. I smiled lightly and looked for a reasonably safe ship. Much of the fleet was rubble now. The last few ships were bolting and falling back like crazy sons of bitches. I spotted one, a small one, slipping away from the firefight. It was odd shaped but looked sturdy. I remembered seeing those in my military history class at school. A Halcyon class destroyer. I quickly hailed it with an SOS message and began my approach. Their docking bay opened and they sent me the friendly message of, and I quote: "Hurry the fuck up." I began the docking process, slowly

pulling into a parked position in the motor pool. All in all it seemed like I left as soon as I was there, but I have no qualms about that. No one would. The ship, I later found out, was called the Pillar of Autumn. The captain, a friendly man named Keyes, briefed me. He said they were going to randomly set a course and escape from the hell that followed us. We eventually made our way to an unidentified object. A ringworld floating in space all alone. A fellow pelican pilot, a female codenamed 'Foehammer', told me that we would be sending marines down, and then after we left, me and her would take our Longsword Bomber training together and become bomber pilots. Well, we'll be approaching the ringworld now, time to go.

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